

## GNOSTIC PRESENCES IN ETHIOPIA

with an introductory essay by

Professor Gianfrancesco Lusini











# GNOSTIC PRESENCES IN ETHIOPIA

Spiritual Lore and Magic in Ethiopian Christianity

#### Paolo Cartocci

Translation into English by

Paul Metcalfe

with an introductory essay by

Professor Gianfrancesco Lusini









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This book was born as a secondary shoot, a lateral bud of a larger comparative research concerning the stories of the true cross of Christ circulating in Ethiopia and their similarities and differences with the ones circulating in Europe and other areas around the Mediterranean sea.

This research, not yet completed, has been conducted in Ethiopia and in Italy but while I was writing the first draft of the text I had to stop when confronted with the theme of gnostic presences in Ethiopia, discussed during the last century and consequently nearly forgotten. It is an important theme and it had to be examined carefully to clarify the meaning of the symbol of the cross and of the relics of the true cross in the Ethiopian cultural landscape. To consent or to deny the presence of the said influences can substantially change the meaning to be given to such entities.

For this reason I interrupted the main research concerning the stories of the cross, to give my attention to this other specific theme of the story of Ethiopian Christianity and to the debate that, during the last century, developed about it.

This interruption, which in the beginning should have lasted just a few days and then a few weeks, actually extended to months and then, a bit further on, to some years and my research was entrapped between the difficulties of the theme and some changing circumstances of my life. That chapter which, at that moment, seemed to be the only impediment to finalize, as soon as possible, the book about the cross, became a kind of marsh sticking to my feet, while I went on reading and reading the old documents and watching for new materials. At the same time, the drafts of the text that I was writing crossed one over the other. But with the time going by it became every day clearer that this theme of the gnostic presences in Ethiopia was becoming independent and that the number of

pages I was writing and rewriting was no longer compatible with the other chapters already sketched.

These circumstances caused me to transform that chapter, drafted so many times, into one independent book. Apparently it was quite a simple operation and according to my plan I had just to prepare a bezel setting on which to fix the text already written. But very soon this operation revealed to be much more complex than I had supposed. The first sections of this book make direct reference to the periods of penetration in Ethiopia of foreign influences, from areas where Gnosticising models of thought were already present. For this reason the same sections, presenting texts containing such characteristics, make reference to their translation from Greek or from Arabic languages. Most of these texts are well known to the scholars and have been object of deep investigations, so the presentation of these texts in the sections dedicated to the period of translations from Greek or from Arabic is very smooth, a simple popularization of the research already available. For the aims of this book it was sufficient to draw the necessary conclusions from the same studies.

On the contrary, the situation was much more complex for the section dedicated to the so called "mikaelite opuscula" edited by Enrico Cerulli in 1958. These opuscula seem to be original Ethiopian creations and the debate dedicated to them remained limited to just a few scholars who have given very different interpretations of the same. For this reason it was necessary to study a controversial subject and to take a position concerning a very important question: whether these texts are evidence of the presence of gnostic influences in Ethiopia, as Cerulli believed; or if these opuscula have nothing to do with Gnosticism, as other scholars, who have opposed the opinion of Cerulli, have written.

When I was studying this matter, the above question had already received an imposing answer with the acceptance, in the *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, of the sceptic opinions expressed by Pierluigi Piovanelli in an essay of 2004. But these opinions are, at least partially, contradictory with the conclusions of this book concerning the periods of the translations from Greek and from Arabic languages.

The above circumstances led me to conduct a deeper examination of these opuscula to understand their meaning and define their collocation in the context of production. But from this analysis was born a chapter, boundless with reference to the others already sketched and much more analytical. So I found myself again in front of a choice. That chapter





dedicated to the "mikaelite opuscula" certainly was the most original part of my research about the theme of this book, but was it possible to put it together with the other parts of the book, which certainly were more synthetic and divulging? The final decision, taken to avoid presenting the readers a drastic change of style in the explanation and probably some difficulties in understanding the text, has been that of rewriting that chapter, in a less analytical form, with mostly the aim of exposing the results of the research, while the more complex version, the essay containing the analysis of the texts, has become an appendix to this book, for anybody interested and patient enough to read it.

Once this decision had been taken, it was possible to cope with the aim I had given to myself: to present a synthesis that, even if dedicated to a complex matter, wanted to be divulging; a synthesis of the research that several scholars have conducted over the years, going deeply inside one or another text or tradition useful in contributing to the matter of the present research. These are very important studies and very useful to my aims, but conducted for other purposes or simply for exegetical reasons, without trying to create a synthesis of the theme object of this study, despite the intention expressed by Jean Doresse and Cerulli in the 1960's and the importance attributed to this matter by them and all the scholars studying Ethiopia in those years. On the contrary, over the years this theme has been minimized or even totally ignored, as is evident from the absence of the entry "Gnosticism" in the *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*. Certainly there is a reason for this and it is not the result of distraction on the part of scholars. The finding of original gnostic manuscripts at Nag Hammadi in 1945 and their publication and translation between 1975 and 1996 have made clear how inaccurate was the information about Gnosticism left by the Fathers of the Church and consequently how incorrect were the detectors of gnostic presences used in the past, for example by Cerulli, during his research on the "mikaelite opuscula" and on other books of Ethiopian literature.

The new availability of original texts pushed the scholars to defer any judgement until the moment when the results of the studies of the new texts would be completely assimilated. But even if many years have already passed since 1996, until now the study of the new texts do not seem to have produced its results with reference to Ethiopia and the theme object of this book. The present study would like to be a first endeavour to sketch this synthesis which is still missing.





But I have also to underline the limits of the present work which does not aim to give a complete picture of the matter. My purpose is to make reference to the essential texts showing the supposed gnostic influences and to draw a guide along the historical path of these presences, for anybody interested in studying such characteristics of the Ethiopian civilization and for anybody who decides to use this book as a starting point to find traces of the same presences in other texts. This guide, drawing its itinerary through a matter at the same time both complex and obscure, tries to give some reference points, some "stations" which are the texts here described, their essential characteristics and their sources of influence. It will be the reader's duty to complete the map here sketched with the help of the information supplied by this book and of other materials, together with their awareness of the dynamics of the historical processes. I believe that this work, despite its limits, can be useful to have a comprehensive vision of the matter and of its problems, in the light of the research conducted during the last 50 years.

I started to write the following pages with the lightness and the arrogance of a person who, without academic competences, decides to rely on his patience, passion and the analytical skill obtained thanks to his juvenile philosophical studies and an in-extinguished passion for the same. Readers will decide if these pages, written probably without modesty, are also without merit. I hope, at least, to have drawn the attention of people who like and study Ethiopia on a theme of its cultural history neglected for so many years.

Before closing these lines, it is my duty to thank the persons who have stimulated, encouraged, helped me and contributed also to give to this book the present final shape. First and foremost Professor Gianfrancesco Lusini who has followed all the phases of my research from the beginning, helping me to find texts, giving suggestions, indicating itineraries of research and supporting me with his deep professional knowledge of Ethiopia and its history and culture. He has read with interest the several drafts of this text offering advice, suggestions and revising when necessary. He has also written the introductory pages to the present edition. Without his help, this book would never have been born. The second person I would like to thank is Luigi Berliocchi, who is no longer with us. He is the first person who spoke to me about the stories of the tree of the cross, from where the present research has taken its first step. Then I have to thank all the scholars and persons who, with their assistance and suggestions, have helped me to overcome some difficulties





I have found during my work. My gratitude goes to Alessandro Gori, Alessandro Bausi, Padre Marco Innocenti, Diego Malara, Sara Fani, Milena Batistoni, Gian Paolo Chiari, Eyob Derillo from the British Library, Jacques Mercier, Michele Petrone, Manuela Galaverni, Simone Fabbrini. A warm memory is due to the late Richard Pankhurst and to his wife Rita. A special thanks to Enrico Castelli who accepted to read the entire text after the translation and has given me important suggestions to clarify some parts and to Mirella Daniell who assisted me during the revision of the translation and the selection of the images. Thanks also to the employees of the libraries of the Pontificio Istituto Orientale in Rome and of the Institute of the Ethiopian Studies in Addis Abeba and to the institutions and publishers which authorized the use of their images, giving a substantial contribution to the present work. Their names and references are always indicated. Rosalia Beccarelli helped me to find some very important texts for my research and Emanuele Ragni has given permission to use some of the images printed here. My warm gratitude goes finally to Maria Tewelde Kidane who has patiently accepted the long afternoons, evenings and weekends I have spent behind closed doors, studying and writing about questions which are part of her history and are emotionally moving but for her it is good that they remain mysteries.

All these persons have given a substantial contribution to my research and it is difficult for me to make a selection to thank some of them for their suggestions concerning the stories of the cross and others for their help with reference to the gnostic presences in Ethiopia. The two are one and the same research which has produced this initial partial result. I hope to have time and energy to conclude the main one, from which point everything started. In any case, the help I have received from the persons quoted above and from all the others whom I have probably forgotten, does not exempt me from the full responsibility for any inaccuracy, mistake, omission or hazardous hypothesis which the reader may find in the following pages.

> Paolo Cartocci March 2019









# INTRODUCTION ABOUT THE RELIGIOUS PAST OF ERITREA AND ETHIOPIA

### Gianfrancesco Lusini Università di Napoli "L'Orientale"

We must be grateful to Paolo Cartocci for undertaking the intellectual endeavor, which brought about the publication of this book. The issue of the Gnostic presences in Late Antique and Mediaeval Ethiopia requests a tremendous effort of interpreting and understanding ancient sources, together with a certain degree of empathy for the historical and religious studies. Moreover, the cultural background in question is a particularly rich and complex meeting point, characterized by a strong and permanent changing and alternation of material and spiritual cultures. With a little imagination, but not erring from the truth, one may notice that – beyond Egypt and Maghreb – Abyssinia is the only African milieu a scholar can investigate diachronically. This is owed to the obvious fact that written records of remarkable antiquity have been rediscovered on the plateau, and for a great part, they contain fragments of a religious speech.

Since Hiob Ludolf's time, for two hundred years connoisseurs of the Ethiopian-Eritrean cultural complex have pointed out religion as the key factor for the comprehension of the identities that confronted each other for three millennia in this part of the world. Later on, from James Bruce to Carlo Conti Rossini, great scholars have oriented their researches in the wake of the anxiety of defining peoples through the description of their languages (Semitic, Cushitic, Nilotic and so on) and religions (Christian, Islamic, Animistic and so on). They treated peoples as if they

were the product of an original self-creation, and as if languages and religions *ab antiquo* were characteristic features of the historical communities. We can consider it a Biblical legacy, a sort of unconfessed psychological subjection to the *Table of Nations* of Genesis as an everlasting representation of ethnic and cultural differences.

In our days, excepting for those who have a political interest in supporting a reactionary mind, we can admit that not only languages and religions, but also every single aspect of the material and spiritual culture of a community is the result of historical processes. Here, we can recognize the effects of a wide spectrum of variables, including conflict and dialogue, misappropriation and exchange, tradition and reception, conservation and transformation of elements. Every attempt to define cultures as monolithic blocs, carved and shaped since immemorial time, is in itself an ideological construction, and therefore, from the point of view of the investigation of the historical truth, an obstacle to remove before starting the research.

Another trivial, but not useless, consideration derives from the geographical and historical map of the region. From the first half of the first millennium BC Abyssinia has been a linguistic border and a cultural frontier, where traditional elements met new cultural trends. Therefore, the Ethio-Semitic languages are the southernmost attested idioms of the Semitic family, and from Late Antiquity to Middle Ages astral religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam found in Eritrea and Ethiopia a limit to their southward expansion. Yet, along this border, on the plateau, urban civilizations deriving from a Near Eastern background constantly melted with local substrata. Each innovative wave coming from the Eastern Mediterranean world, via the Nile Valley, and from the Arabian Peninsula, via the Red Sea, gave birth to political and social bodies derived in different ways from a common model, but constantly reassembled in a creative form, taking into account the local traditions.

This is verifiable at least from the times of Da'amat, a cultural complex whose «exogenous elements are like ingredients which are mixed and cooked according to a recipe which is typically local—the syntax—and dressed in a local sauce». As to the same Kingdom of Aksum, some aspects of its culture can be regarded as the southernmost expression both of the Semitic and the Hellenistic world, but the interaction with the



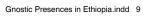


<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> A. Manzo, "Capra nubiana in Berbere sauce? Pre-Aksumite Art and Identity Building," in African Archaeological Review 26 (2009): 291–303, at 299.



substratum reshaped the whole figure, giving it an enigmatic look. Though we have an incomplete, but sufficient understanding of the Aksumite Gəʻəz used for the great royal inscriptions, some of the epigraphic records in Old Ethiopic still present many problems, «massimamente perché il tessuto lessicale che in essi appare sfugge quasi del tutto a ogni nostra interpretazione sia per il valore dei suoi temi sia per quello delle sue forme».<sup>2</sup>

In the Ancient World, and in Ethiopia as well, in the first half of the first millennium BC the most ancient written records witness the presence of a pluralistic natural credence. Nevertheless, in the commemorative inscriptions connected to the political experience of Da'amat, dating to 8th-7th century BC and written in ASA (Ancient South-Arabic), we can recognize religious elements specifically Ethiopian. In some inscriptions, original features appear not attested in Yemen, and then not attributable to the South-Arabian model tout court, such as the veneration for the deities called rb and s2mn. When over a libation altar we found the expression hany mtryn lşdan (RIÉ 47),3 everything is out of the South-Arabic norm. The verb *hqny* 'dedicate' is joined to the object through the preposition *l*- (in ASA the same verb is transitive). The noun *mtry* is derived from a root well known in Gə'əz (Ancient Ethiopic) in both forms taraya and atraya with the meaning 'possess, take possession, purchase, obtain, acquire' (in ASA the root is unknown). The personal noun sdq<sup>n</sup> (sdq plus the determination -n) is unattested in South-Arabia. Put after the verb 'dedicate', sdq<sup>n</sup> can't be other than a god name, and the sentence can be interpreted 'he dedicated this property (the altar bearing the inscription) to sdq", namely 'the Righteous' or 'the Friend'. Moreover, another god



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Lanfranco Ricci, "Iscrizioni paleoetiopiche," in *Semitic Studies In honor of Wolf Leslau On the occasion of his eighty-fifth birthday*, ed. A.S. Kaye (Wiesbaden, 1991): 1291-1311, at 1292-1293, translation: "mostly because the lexical fabric which appears in them almost completely eludes our every interpretation, both in the relevance of its themes and of its forms".

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> RIÉ = Etienne Bernard, Abraham Johannes Drewes, Roger Schneider, Recueil des inscriptions de l'Éthiopie des périodes pré-axoumite et axoumite – Tome I. Les documents – Tome II. Les planches (Paris, 1991). Etienne Bernard, Recueil des inscriptions de l'Éthiopie des périodes pré-axoumite et axoumite – Tome III. Traductions et commentaires – A. Les inscriptions grecques (Paris, 2000). Abraham Johannes Drewes, Recueil des inscriptions de l'Éthiopie des périodes pré-axoumite et axoumite – Tome III. Traductions et commentaires – B. Les inscriptions sémitiques. Texte révisé et adapté par Manfred Kropp, édité par Manfred Kropp et Harry Stroomer, Aethiopistische Forschungen 85 (Wiesbaden, 2019).

name unknown in the South-Arabian context surfaces from the construction  $hqny \ l\ddot{s}yh^n \ (RIE \ 51)$ , 'he dedicated to  $\dot{s}yh^n' \ (\dot{s}yh)$  plus the determination -n), possibly 'the Honorable', corroborating that Da'amat deities were the product of an original Ethiopian processing.

Moving on to Aksum, epigraphic documents dating to the reign of 'Ezana allow again appreciating the specific Abyssinian features in matters of religion, so that «se si cerca una testimonianza dell'originalità della cultura etiopica, in sé e dopo la colonizzazione sudarabica dell'VIII-IV sec. a.C., questo costituisce certo uno degli esempi più chiari - ancorché dei meno citati». In spite of the regrettable lack of evidence about liturgy, for a long time now we have realized that the pantheon of Aksum (or at least of that part of its ruling class that left inscriptions) can't be interpreted simply as an imitation of foreign models. The most frequently associated deities are 'Astär, Bəher and Mährəm, and as such this triad doesn't trace back to any Sabaic, or generally South-Arabic, model. There is little doubt that 'Astär is a divinization of the Sky, Bəher of the Land, and Mährəm is the War-god intimately connected to the royal dynasty, whose members claim to be 'sons of Mährəm'. The status of Mədər, the fourth god, a divinization of the Earth appearing once at the place of Bəher (RIÉ 185 ii.21: 'Astär, Mədər and Mährəm) and once at the place of Mährəm (RIÉ 188 25-26: 'Astär, Bəher and Mədər), who is mentioned in the same inscription a few lines later (RIÉ 188 29-30), remains ambiguous in our eyes.

The role of local sanctuaries and clergies in venerating specific deities can be called into question to explain why 'Ezana in his inscriptions was sometimes fluctuating between more than one solution, including or excluding god names according to momentary political aims. Greek inscriptions somehow confirm this impression. *RIÉ* 270bis contains a dedication to Uranus, Gea and Ares, probably corresponding to the triad 'Astär, Mədər and Mäḥrəm (as in *RIÉ* 185 ii.21). Yet, *Adulitana II* contains the divine triad Zeus, Ares and Poseidon, possibly corresponding to 'Astär, Mäḥrəm and Bəḥer and suggesting that Bəḥer could have been a god



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Paolo Marrassini, Storia e leggenda dell'Etiopia tardoantica. Le iscrizioni reali aksumite, con un'appendice di Rodolfo Fattovich e una nota editoriale di Alessandro Bausi (Brescia, 2014): 49, translation: "if we search for evidence about the originality of the Ethiopian culture, in itself and after the South-Arabic colonization from the 8th-4th century B.C., this certainly constitutes one of the clearest examples – albeit one of the less quoted".



strictly connected to sanctuaries venerated in Adulis. The position of Bəḥer-Poseidon among the four main deities of the Aksumite pantheon points out the importance of the port of trade within the political geography of the Kingdom. The same introduction of Christianity in Ethiopia is one of the consequences of the direct contact of Aksum with the Greco-Roman world, thanks to its tight economic and political relationship with the port of Adulis, the most important harbour of the whole 'Eritrean' Sea in Late Antiquity.

As everybody knows, under the reign of the same 'Ezana, around 340, the Gospel faith was adopted as the official religion of the court and of the ruling class of the Kingdom. Even after that, apparently, the terminology remained uncertain, and this fact goes without a clear explanation, as in the emblematic case of RIÉ 189. In this inscription in vocalized Gə'əz, to indicate the unique God the expressions əgzi'a sämay 'Lord of the sky', əgzi'a sämay zäbäsämay wämədr 'Lord of the sky which is in the sky and on the earth', and agzi'a kwallu 'Lord of everything' are used. Independently from its relationship with the two similar inscriptions RIÉ 190 in South-Arabic writing and RIÉ 271 in Greek, the adoption of a monotheistic speech not specifically Christian is a problem that requires some comments. In a comparative key, the religious events occurring in the same years on the opposite shore of the Red Sea can provide an interpretative way. Actually, in South-Arabia (the Kingdom of Himyar), after 380, the pluralistic invocation is substituted by dedications to Rahmānān, the most frequent god name, then also to Il or Ilān or Ilahān. Epithets like 'Master' or 'Lord of the sky' (b'l or mr' s<sup>1</sup>my") and 'Lord of the sky and of the earth'  $(mr's^{1}my^{n}w-rd^{n})$  are used. In this case, we observe again a terminological fluctuation, but this isn't necessarily an evidence of hesitation about the meaning of the religious message.

Actually, in the current language and culture we can become influenced by a dogmatic tradition, taking for granted that whatever Abrahamic belief is regularly associated to a revelation, of which the holy scripture should be the container and the intermediary at the same time. Consequently, we commonly admit that the features of the message and of the following announcement are defined from the very beginning, namely from the moment of their first appearance. On the contrary, we should always recall that the same monotheistic thought is always the product of historical processes, and as such it is susceptible to variations, adaptations and changes, depending on several factors. Moreover, the



search for the words more suitable for defining the religious notions, first of all the same divine nature and personality, is one of the most challenging and risky activities for those who are engaged in developing and spreading their own religious message, and in making it efficacious through the God invocation.

Considering this aspect, all the fluctuations of the religious language must be considered as historical events, outcomes of processes, to be interpreted in the most documented and rational way. This applies also to the prodigious survival of the names of Semitic astral divinity, as the wellknown 'Attar(-t). In the inscriptions of 'Ezana - as we have seen - it appears in the form 'Astär as the divinization of the sky. The word survives in Tigre, the northernmost Semitic language of Ethiopia, spoken between Eritrea and Sudan, where 'astär still indicates the celestial sphere. Even more remarkably though, in Gə'əz the same word is used to translate κύριος, the name of Lord in the two passages of the Book of Ecclesiasticus (the Wisdom of Sirach) 31:8 and 37:21. In his monotheistic inscription 'Ezana not only calls God 'Lord of the sky' and 'Lord of the sky which is in the sky and on the earth', but also declares that he won bähaylä əgzi'a baher 'through the strength of the Lord of the land' (11. 33-34). These are all signs of the linguistic effort aimed at indicating the object of the monotheistic cult with the words of a pluralist religious past. In Gə'əz this linguistic quest will reach its fulfilment with the systematic and definitive adoption of the god name əgzi'abəher to indicate the Christian God.

Therefore, the Late Antique background of Aksum is complex, exposed to novelties, and receptive. Particularly, sailors and merchants of various origins and linguistic affiliation used to land at the big harbour of Adulis, along the sea route between Alexandria and India. Many of them were representatives of all the great religions of that time, which is why «it is unreasonable to assume that no Jewish, Jewish-Christian, Samaritan, or Manichaean travellers coming from the Roman harbours of Aila and Clysma ever made a stop in Adulis and, eventually, a visit to Aksum». Moreover, though the documentation tracing back directly to the 3<sup>rd</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> centuries is scanty, we must recall the amazing capacity of the Ethiopian clergy to retain and transmit parts of the most remote periods. This is the





<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Pierluigi Piovanelli, "Reconstructing the Social and Cultural History of the Aksumite Kingdom: Some Methodological Reflections," in *Inside and Out. Interactions between Rome and the Peoples on the Arabian and Egyptian Frontiers in Late Antiquity*, ed. Jitse H.F. Dijkstra and Greg Fisher (Louvain, 2014), 331–352, at 350–351.



result of the unceasing work done by learned men who rebuilt history on ancient grounds, as in the case of the so-called royal lists «since it is known that the compilers drew on various sources, also including coins and inscriptions, if not also archival documents».

To sum up, we can see in the religious past of Eritrea and Ethiopia the typical traits of a multi-cultural setting, a crossroad where there was room for a large number of influences, encouraging «la conservazione d'antiche 'eresie' in aree periferiche come l'Etiopia (o la Nubia) ed il Yemen, che lungamente han subito l'influsso della civiltà greco-romana [...], ma a differenza di Siria ed Egitto, d'Armenia e Georgia non furono mai provincia di Roma o di Bisanzio». In this context, the circulation of Gnostic ideas can't be excluded, particularly if they can be detected here and there in later texts. By using the book of Paolo Cartocci, the reader will be guided to the discovery of the possible remains of an ancient philosophical teaching, surviving the periodical religious reforms thanks to the initiative of small groups of Christian monks. Imbued with radical ideas of Salvation, probably they transmitted unorthodox ideas from generation to generation, leaving in their works «tracce di idee gnostiche e di concetti dualistici non lontani da quelli manichei».8 The responsibility of the modern scholar is to track those ideas with close attention, and to recall the memory of their old Ethiopian advocates.





<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Alessandro Bausi, "The recently published Ethiopic inscription of King Ḥafilā (AΦΙΛΑC): a few remarks," *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 75, 3-4 (2012): 286–295, at 289.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Gianfranco Fiaccadori, *Teofilo Indiano* (Ravenna, 1992): xxxix, translation: "the conservation of ancient 'heresies' in peripheral areas like Ethiopia (or Nubia) and Yemen, which for a long time underwent the influx of the Greco-Roman civilization [...], but unlike Syria, Egypt, Armenia and Georgia never became provinces of Rome or Byzantium".

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Enrico Cerulli, *La letteratura etiopica. Terza edizione ampliata. L'Oriente Cristiano nell'unità delle sue tradizioni* (Firenze-Milano, 1968): 46, translation: "traces of Gnostic ideas and of dualistic concepts not differing much from Manichean ones".